

The Portland Streetcar will receive \$45 million in federal funds for fiscal year 2009, according to the Omnibus Appropriations Act released on Monday. The bill is expected to pass Congress later this week.

That figure will help the Portland Streetcar expand its operations for the proposed Portland Streetcar Loop, which will connect the Central Eastside to downtown Portland.

Congressman Blumenauer has been a tireless advocate for the Portland Streetcar since 1990 when, as a Portland City Council member, he initiated the Streetcar Visibility Study. The Streetcar became reality after the 1999 groundbreaking ceremony during Blumenauer's second term in Congress. Since then, he has been a champion of efforts to bring streetcars back to communities around the country.

The project will extend the streetcar tracks from the Pearl District, across the Broadway Bridge to Lloyd Center, where it will travel on Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Grand Avenue to SE Sherman Street, with 18 new stops in all. TriMet estimates that the projected 3.5 million riders will reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled by 28 million miles per year.

Construction of the project is scheduled to begin this year and finish by 2011.